

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Continuing Resolution Legislation *November 13, 1995*

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.J. 115, the Second Continuing Resolution for fiscal year 1996.

This legislation would raise Medicare premiums on senior citizens, and deeply cut education and environmental protection, as the cost for keeping the government running. Those are conditions that are not necessary to meet my goal of balancing the budget.

If I signed my name to this bill now, millions of elderly couples all across this country would be forced to sign away \$264 more in Medicare premiums next year, premium hikes that are not necessary to balance the budget. If America must close down access to quality education, a clean environment and affordable health care for our seniors, in order to keep the government open, then that price is too high.

We don't need these cuts to balance the budget. And we do not need big cuts in education and the environment to balance the budget. I have proposed a balanced budget without these cuts.

I will continue to fight for my principles: a balanced budget that does not undermine Medicare, education or the environment, and that does not raise taxes on working families. I will not take steps that I believe will weaken our nation, harm our people and limit our future as the cost of temporarily keeping the government open.

I continue to be hopeful that we can find common ground on balancing the budget. With

this veto, it is now up to the Congress to take the reasonable and responsible course. They can still avoid a government shutdown.

Congress still has the opportunity to pass clean continuing resolution and debt ceiling bills. These straightforward measures would allow the United States government to keep functioning and meet its obligations, without attempting to force the acceptance of Republican budget priorities.

Indeed, when Congress did not pass the 13 appropriations bills to fund the government for fiscal year 1996 by September 30, we agreed on a fair continuing resolution that kept the Government operating and established a level playing field while Congress completed its work.

Now, more than six weeks later, Congress still has sent me only three bills that I have been able to sign. Indeed, I am pleased to be signing the Energy and Water bill today. This bill is the result of a cooperative effort between my Administration and the Congress. It shows that when we work together, we can produce good legislation.

We can have a fair and open debate about the best way to balance the budget. America can balance the budget without extreme cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education or the environment—and that is what we must do.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 13, 1995.

Remarks on the Federal Government Shutdown *November 14, 1995*

Good afternoon. Today, as of noon, almost half of the Federal Government employees are idle. The Government is partially shutting down because Congress has failed to pass the straightforward legislation necessary to keep the Government running without imposing sharp hikes

in Medicare premiums and deep cuts in education and the environment.

It is particularly unfortunate that the Republican Congress has brought us to this juncture because, after all, we share a central goal, balancing the Federal budget. We must lift the burden of debt that threatens the future of our

children and grandchildren. And we must free up money so that the private sector can invest, create jobs, and our economy can continue its healthy growth.

Since I took office, we have cut the Federal deficit nearly in half. It is important that the people of the United States know that the United States now has proportionately the lowest Government budget deficit of any large industrial nation. We have eliminated 200,000 positions from the Federal bureaucracy since I took office. Our Federal Government is now the smallest percentage of the civilian work force it has been since 1933, before the New Deal. We have made enormous progress, and now we must finish the job.

Let me be clear: We must balance the budget. I proposed to Congress a balanced budget, but Congress refused to enact it. Congress has even refused to give me the line-item veto to help me achieve further deficit reduction. But we must balance this budget without resorting to their priorities, without their unwise cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, in education and the environment.

Five months ago I proposed my balanced budget plan. It balances the budget in the right way. It cuts hundreds of wasteful and outdated programs. But it upholds our fundamental values to provide opportunity, to respect our obligations to our parents and our children, to strengthen families, and to strengthen America because it preserves Medicare and Medicaid, it invests in education and technology, it protects the environment, and it gives the tax cuts to working families for childrearing and for education.

Unfortunately, Republican leaders in Washington have put ideology ahead of common sense and shared values in their pursuit of a budget plan. We can balance the budget without doing what they seek to do. We can balance the budget without the deep cuts in education, without the deep cuts in the environment, without letting Medicare wither on the vine, without imposing tax increases on the hardest pressed working families in America.

I am fighting for a balanced budget that is good for America and consistent with our values. If they'll give me the tools, I'll balance the budget.

I vetoed the spending bill sent to me by Congress last night because America can never accept under pressure what it would not accept

in free and open debate. I strongly believe their budget plan is bad for America. I believe it will undermine opportunity, make it harder for families to do the work that they have to do, weaken our obligations to our parents and our children, and make our country more divided. So I will continue to fight for the right kind of balanced budget.

Remember, the Republicans are following a very explicit strategy announced last April by Speaker Gingrich to use the threat of a Government shutdown to force America to accept their cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, to accept their cuts in education and technology and the environment. Yesterday they sent me legislation that said we will only keep the Government going and we will only let it pay its debts if, and only if, we accept their cuts in Medicare, their cuts in education, their cuts in the environment, and their repeal of 25 years of bipartisan commitments to protect the environment and public health.

On behalf of the American people, I said no. If America has to close down access to education, to a clean environment, to affordable health care to keep our Government open, then the price is too high.

My message to Congress is simple: You say you want to balance the budget, so let's say yes to balancing the budget. But let us together say no to these deep and unwise cuts in education, technology, the environment, Medicare, and Medicaid. Let's say no to raising taxes on the hardest pressed working families in America. These things are not necessary to balance the budget. Yes to balancing the budget; no to the cuts.

I know the loss of Government service will cause disruption in the lives of millions of Americans. We will do our very best to minimize this hardship. But there is, after all, a simple solution to the problem. All Congress has to do is to pass a straightforward bill to let Government perform its duties and pay its debts. Then we can get back to work and resolve our differences over the budget in an open, honest, and straightforward manner.

Before I conclude, I'd like to say a word to the hundreds of thousands of Federal employees who will be affected by this partial shutdown. I know, as your fellow citizens know, that the people who are affected by this shutdown are public servants. They're the people who process our Social Security applications,

help our veterans apply for benefits, care for the national parks that are our natural heritage. They conduct the medical research that saves people's lives. They are important to America, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. I will do everything I can to see that they receive back pay and that their families do not suffer because of this.

But it is my solemn responsibility to stand against a budget plan that is bad for America and to stand up for a balanced budget that is good for America. And that is exactly what I intend to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:38 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

Statement on Action To Prevent Default on the Public Debt *November 15, 1995*

The Republican Congress has failed to take responsible action to prevent default for the first time in our history and to ensure that the Government can meet its obligations, including paying next month's Social Security benefits. To prevent against default and all of its subsequent harmful consequences, my Secretary of Treasury

has been forced today to take extraordinary but necessary actions. I won't allow the Republican Congress to force us into default or put Social Security beneficiaries at risk. If the Republican Congress won't take action to prevent default and protect Social Security recipients, I will.

The President's News Conference *November 16, 1995*

The President. Good afternoon. Today the Congress is considering a bill I find objectionable because once again it requires acceptance of the congressional Republican budget as a condition of reopening the Government.

Let me repeat: Holding the Government, the Federal employees, and the millions of Americans who depend upon them hostage to the congressional Republican budget is not the way to do this work. And it won't work, because I will still veto any bill that requires crippling cuts in Medicare, weakens the environment, reduces educational opportunity, or raises taxes on working families.

I have proposed a plan to balance the budget without undermining Medicare and Medicaid, education, the environment, or working families' incomes. If I were to sign their 7-year plan, in effect, I would be approving these cuts. I won't do that because I believe it would be bad for America.

We must balance the budget in a way that doesn't weaken our economy or violate our val-

ues, including providing the opportunity for Americans to make the most of their own lives, helping families to grow stronger and to stay together, strengthening our communities and our country.

Congress should act responsibly and pass a straightforward legislation to open the Government and enable it to meet its financial obligations. They should do it right now. That's what Congresses in the past have done, and that's what this Congress did last September.

The American people should not be held hostage anymore to the Republican budget priorities. So today I am sending Congress straightforward legislation that would reopen the Government without delay and without enacting into law the Republican budget.

We have to get to work on this in a serious way. I will work, I will work, with Congress in good faith to balance the budget. But I want to do it in a way that is good for America. It is not the fault of the Federal employees or the millions of Americans who depend upon